



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Rivers Corporate Park –Rivers Overlook

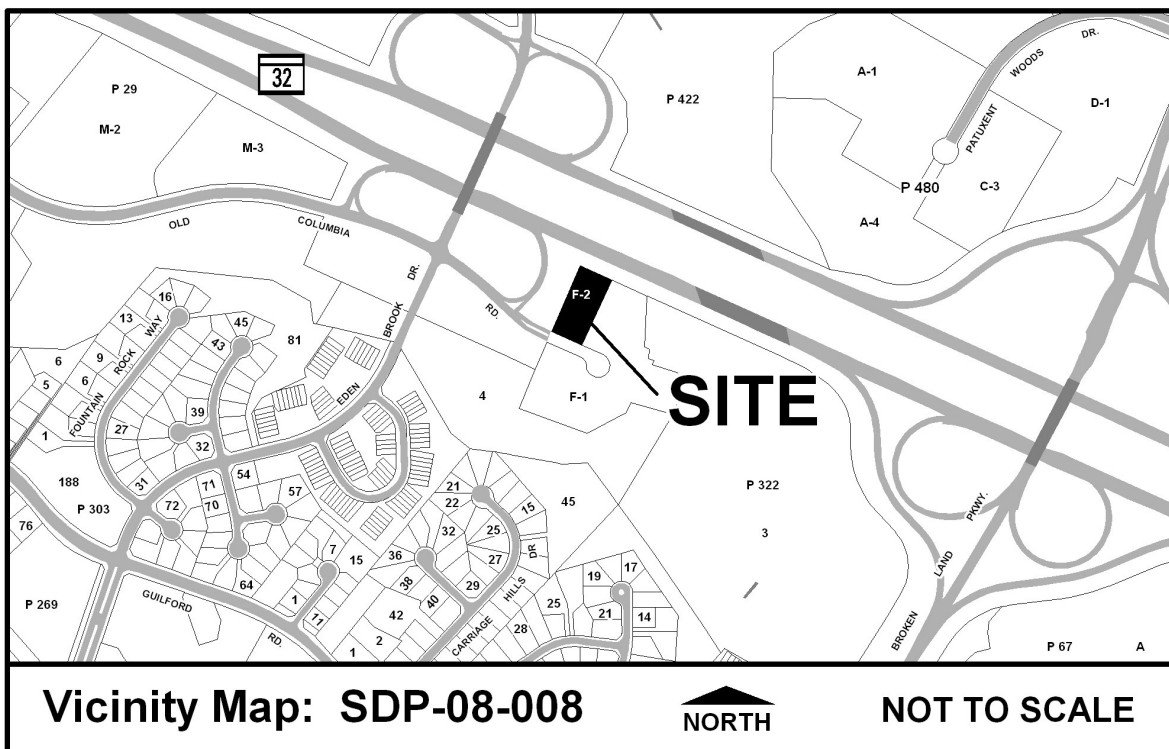
Planning Board Meeting of April 10, 2008

File No./Petitioner: SDP-08-008, Taylor Family LP

Project Name: Rivers Corporate Park Section 1, Area 1, Parcel 322, Parcel F-2 – Rivers Overlook, 10000 Old Columbia Rd Office Building

Request: The request is for approval of a Site Development Plan (SDP) for the construction of a four-story office building and associated site improvements on a previously improved property in accordance with Section 125 of the Howard County Zoning Regulations and the criteria listed in Final Development Plan (FDP)–184-A-IV. The applicant is also requesting approval to increase the maximum building height from 50' to 60' as well as to reduce the west parking setback from 10' to 3' and the south parking setback from 25' to 8'. The subject property contains approximately 1.157 acres and is zoned NT, Employment Area -Industrial.

Location: The site is located south of MD Route 32 between Eden Brook Way and Broken Land Parkway, at the eastern terminus of Old Columbia Rd, identified as Parcel F-2 of Parcel 322 on Tax Map 42, Grid No. 8 in the Sixth Election District of Howard County, Maryland.



Vicinal Properties: This site is located in the Rivers Corporate Park and is surrounded by the following:

North Side – Maryland Route 32.

East Side – Rivers Corporate Park, Sec. 1, Area 1, Parcel F-1, Brit Crystal Heights

South Side - Rivers Corporate Park, Sec. 1, Area 1, Parcel F-1, Brit Crystal Heights

West Side – SHA-owned ramp for Maryland Route 32.

Site History:

- **SDP-86-010** – Mobil Oil Corporation, 10000 Old Columbia Road, Rivers Corporate Park Parcel “F-2”, Approved by the Planning Board 7/24/85. Signed 10/21/85.
- **FDP-184-A-IV** – Rivers Corporate Park, Section 1, Areas 1 and 2, Amended, Recorded 10/20/06. The purpose of the Amended FDP was to add religious activities criteria under permitted use and to add the parking requirement for religious facilities under parking requirements. Previous amendments to the FDP were to:
 - **184-A:** Revise Sheets 2-7, 10, and 11 to reflect change in alignment of Old Columbia Road and Riverwood Drive.
 - **184-A-I:** Revise Sheets 1-5 to reflect change to Riverwood Drive and add special gas station criteria for Parcel F-2 and incorporate Parcel G formerly recorded as plat 3054 –A-44 in Lot 3.
 - **184-A-II:** Revise Sheets 2,3, 9 and 10 to reflect changes of 3.163 acres of land from open space to 3.163 of non-credited open space, to correct errors in distances and bearings on Sheets 9&10 as recorded in FDP-184-A-I and to show the new zoning section numbers on Sheets 2 and 3.
 - **184-A-III:** Revise Sheets 1,3, 7 and 9 to add 2.5 acres of industrial land use to this phase.

Site Analysis:

This Site Development Plan has been evaluated for compliance with FDP–184-A-IV. Where the Final Development Plan is silent, compliance with the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Regulations, and other applicable regulations are required. See Attachment A for the proposed layout of the site. Below is a summary of major criteria used in the evaluation:

Site Improvements: The SDP proposes the construction of a four-story office building measuring 60 feet tall and consisting of 34,500 square feet of floor area. The area of plan submission is 1.157 acres, which encompasses the entirety of Parcel F-2, Parcel 322. The building coverage of the site is 10,050 square feet or 19.97% of the site area. A total of 82 parking spaces will be provided. Vehicles will access the site through an access point onto Old Columbia Road. A sidewalk is also proposed at the front of the site.

Permitted Land Uses - In accordance with FDP–184-A-IV, office uses are permitted

by right within the Employment Area –Industrial land use.

Stormwater Management: This project is considered “Redevelopment.” New stormdrains are being installed as well as two “Stormceptors” in order to improve the water quality of the managed stormwater.

Landscaping: The Landscape Plan for this project complies with the Howard County Landscape Manual and Section 16.124 of the Howard County Code. The applicant will provide landscaping along the parcel boundaries, around the building and within the parking lot. Surety for all landscaping required by the Landscape Manual will be provided with the Developer’s Agreement.

Forest Conservation: The property is exempt from the requirements of Section 16.1200 of the Howard County Code for Forest Conservation because the property is zoned NT - Employment Area -Industrial and has had preliminary plan approval prior to 12/31/92 per Section 16.1202(b)(1)(iv).

Environmental Concerns: No wetlands, wetland buffers, streams, stream buffers, steep slopes, Forest Conservation Easement Areas or 100-year floodplain exist on site. This site has been previously graded.

Height Requirement - In accordance with FDP–184-A-IV, buildings cannot exceed 50’ in height except in accordance with a Site Development Plan approved by the Howard County Planning Board. The proposed building is 60’ in height. Additional building setbacks have been provided relative to the additional height of the building. Please see the “Adjustment Criteria” section of this report for further analysis of the request for increased height.0

Setback Requirements - This project meets all applicable building setbacks as required per FDP–184-A-IV for Employment Area -Industrial Land Use Areas, but the applicant is requesting relief from parking setbacks:

- No building is allowed within 25’ of any public road, street or highway right-of-way. Any building or structure exceeding 20’ in height shall be set back one additional foot for each additional foot of building height in excess of 20’. With a building height of 60’, the setback is increased 40’ for a total building and structure setback requirement of 65’ for the office building. There is no stated building setback from lot lines; however buildings must be setback at least 100’ from the nearest residential district. The proposed building is set back 98.5’ feet from Maryland Route 32 and 88.5’ from Old Columbia Road. The nearest residential district is at least 600’ from the proposed building.
- No parking is allowed within 10’ of any lot line or within 25’ of any public right of way. The parking for this project will be located 25’ from the edge of the Maryland Route 32 right-of-way and 10’ from the east lot line. The applicant is requesting a reduction of the west parking setback from 10’ to 3’ and the south parking setback from 25’ to 8’ to allow for room for landscaping around the building. See “Adjustment Criteria” for further analysis on the proposed adjustments to the setback requirements for the site.

Adjustment Criteria - The Planning Board may approve adjustments to the bulk regulations shown on the FDP, such as parking, setback, height, lot coverage or other bulk requirements, based on the following criteria:

“The adjustment will not alter the character of the neighborhood or area in which the property is located, will not impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property and will not be detrimental to the public welfare.”

“The adjustment a) is needed due to practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships which arise in complying strictly with the Final Development Plan; and/or b) results in better design than would be allowed by strict compliance with the development criteria.”

With these criteria in mind, the requested adjustments for this project are analyzed:

- **Parking** – As stated above, the applicant is requesting a reduction of the west parking setback from 10’ to 3’ and the south parking setback from 25’ to 8’. The proximity of parking to the right-of-way pavement and lot line is equidistant to the parking for Parcel F-1 on the opposite side of Old Columbia Rd and is therefore consistent with the neighborhood. The applicant states that the setback reduction was requested by GGP to provide landscaping space around the building and to allow for consistency with the surrounding existing development. DPZ supports the request for reduced setbacks.
- **Height** – The applicant seeks to increase the maximum height of the proposed building from 50’ to 60’. The primary rationale for the increased height is the size and shape constraints of the site, which is only 1.157 acres, much smaller than other parcels in Rivers Corporate Park, and is a long, narrow strip of land. It is difficult to ensure space for adequate parking, vehicle circulation, and other required improvements for an office development on the subject site without decreasing the building footprint and increasing building height. It should be noted that the height of surrounding existing buildings is approximately 28’, and are of a much lower profile than the proposed building. However, the overall use of the property is consistent with the surrounding area, and therefore, the proposed development is compatible with the neighborhood. Incorporating architectural features into the proposed building that are consistent with the architecture of the existing surrounding buildings could further this desired result.

As stated above, the closest residential district is over 600’ away from the subject site, reducing the height impact to surrounding area. Finally, as stated in the above section, additional setbacks from both the MD Route 32 and Old Columbia Road right-of-ways have been incorporated into the plan, off-setting the height impacts from the road. With these factors in mind, DPZ supports the additional height due to the size and shape constraints of the site, the compensation of setbacks from the roads, and the opportunity for the building to blend with the existing surrounding structures despite the height differential.

Coverage Requirements - In accordance with FDP-184-A-IV, no more than 50 percent of the land included within any lot shall be covered by buildings or other major structures. There is no coverage limitation imposed upon the area used for

sidewalks, paved parking areas, landscaping or minor structures. As proposed, the building coverage is 19.97 percent of the site. Paved area consists of 59.03 percent of the site. A portion of the parking is located under a cantilevered section of the building.

Parking Requirements - Per FDP-184-A-IV, 2 parking spaces shall be provided for each 1,000 square feet of net leasable office area. Per the Site Development Plan, the site will include 34,500 square feet of offices. Based on the proposal, 69 parking spaces are required. There will be 82 off-street parking spaces (including 4 handicap spaces) provided within the parking lot.

SRC Action:

On January 31, 2008, the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC) determined that this SDP may be approved subject to compliance with comments from the Department of Inspections, Licensing, and Permits, the Development Engineering Division and the Division of Land Development issued in the Department of Planning and Zoning's letters of August 31, 2007, and November 14, 2007.


Please note that this file is available for public review at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Recommendation:

The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends that the Planning Board approve this SDP, and the associated increase in building height to 60 feet and reduction in parking setbacks to 3' along the western boundary and 8' along the southern boundary, subject to compliance with the SRC agency comments issued for SDP-08-008.

03/28/08

Date



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